

Cooley Dickinson Hospital Shares a Description of the Care Transition Work of their Nominee Tamilie Cole-Poklewski, RN, MS

[Cooley Dickinson Hospital](#) nominated our Director of Case Management, Quality Improvement, and Risk Management, Ms. Tamilie Cole-Poklewski, RN, MS for the 2010 Betsy Lehman Patient Safety Recognition Award for leading our organization in the important work of improving care transitions across the continuum. Ms. Cole-Poklewski focused on reducing readmissions of those patients whose primary diagnosis was heart failure, also Cooley Dickinson's largest population of thirty-day readmissions. Her aim was to start with a smaller set of patients and expand the work to other diagnoses as successes were achieved. She formed a multi-disciplinary **Mesosystem team** (works to improve processes that cross multiple Microsystems) to look closely at the care of our heart failure patients.

Ms. Cole-Poklewski began by coaching her team through the process of **value stream mapping**, a technique for creating a graphic representation of the current state of care. From utilization of the value stream map, the team discovered many pitfalls in the heart failure care process. One of the most evident problems in this care was the lack of consistent, comprehensive patient teaching across the care continuum. The team identified more than 10 different tools being used to teach heart failure patients inside and outside the hospital environment with varied and conflicting information about post-hospital care. Poor heart failure education results in patients not being competent in self-care and consequently in frequent readmissions.

Ms. Cole-Poklewski organized a group called the **Hampshire County Continuum of Care Consortium**. This group is comprised of representatives from community care organizations including nursing facilities, senior centers, primary care physicians, home care services, and elder care services. The consortium collaborates with the Senior Health Advisory Group a local community consumer group that focuses on post-hospital patient experiences. Through Ms. Cole-Poklewski's leadership of the consortium, she was able to rally agreement among all of the participants to work toward using a **single heart failure teaching tool** in all environments.

If you are interested in learning more about Cooley Dickinson Hospital and Ms. Cole-Poklewski's care transition work and improvements please contact:

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